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PP RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHGH RUEHKN RUEHMJ RUEHNZ RUEHPB

DE RUEHWL #0621/01 2350622

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 230622Z AUG 07

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4611

INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 1698

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0353

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 4930

RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI PRIORITY 0021

RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 0051

RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 0065

RUEHKN/AMEMBASSY KOLONIA PRIORITY 0011

RUEHKL/AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY 0184

RUEHMJ/AMEMBASSY MAJURO PRIORITY 0113

RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 0542

RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0291

RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 0670

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0644

RUEHNZ/AMCONSUL AUCKLAND PRIORITY 1440

RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0001

RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 0002

RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 0026

RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 0128

RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE PRIORITY 0108

RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI PRIORITY 0005

RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 0007

RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY PRIORITY 0565

RHMFIUU/201AS ANDREWS AFB MD PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY 0170

RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 000621

SIPDIS

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EAP/ANP, EB TPP/ABT (FOR PAUL SAXTON), STATE PASS TO USTR,
USDA FOR FAS/OCRA FAS/OSTA, FAS/ONA FAS/OFSO/DEVER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND WILLING TO START AN IMPORT SAFETY
DIALOGUE

REF: SECSTATE 114788

¶1. SUMMARY: ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL ATTACHES CONVEYED POINTS IN REF CABLE TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE AND THE NEW ZEALAND FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY (NZFSA). THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT WELCOMES THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAINTAIN A DIALOGUE ON FOOD AND PRODUCT SAFETY WITH THE UNITED STATES AND TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO FIND BETTER WAYS OF ENSURING SAFETY. END SUMMARY

¶2. NZFSA IS MOVING RAPIDLY TO IMPLEMENT THE OUTCOMES OF THE IMPORTED FOOD REVIEW, WHICH WAS COMPLETED IN 2004 AND DONE IN CONCERT WITH THE DOMESTIC FOOD REVIEW. THE IMPORTED FOOD REVIEW COVERED ALL IMPORTED FOODS AND BEVERAGES, AGRICULTURAL COMPOUNDS INCLUDING FERTILIZERS AND ANIMAL FEEDS, VETERINARY MEDICINES AND PET FOODS.

¶3. THE NEW SYSTEM PLACES A GREATER OBLIGATION ON IMPORTERS TO ENSURE FOOD SAFETY. IT ALSO REVIEWS EXPORTING COUNTRY SYSTEMS AND ASSURANCES TO ENSURE THEY MEET OR ARE EQUIVALENT TO NEW ZEALAND'S STANDARDS FOR DOMESTIC FOOD. THE SYSTEM IS UNDERPINNED BY HEIGHTENED MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE AND IMPROVED RESPONSIVENESS TO EMERGING ISSUES.

¶4. THE NEW SYSTEM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN STAGES OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. IT WILL REQUIRE INCREASED COLLABORATION AMONG AGENCIES AND, IN SOME CASES, LEGISLATIVE CHANGES. THE NEW SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY FORMALIZES THE ROLE OF THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY AND PLACES MORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING FOOD SAFETY AND SUITABILITY OFF-SHORE TO THE COUNTRIES THAT PRODUCE AND EXPORT FOOD TO NEW ZEALAND THUS MAKING THE

EXPORTING COUNTRIES THE SO-CALLED "RISK MANAGER" FOR NEW ZEALAND.

¶15. WHENEVER THERE IS A FOOD SAFETY CONCERN OVER A PARTICULAR PRODUCT, NEW ZEALAND STEPS UP TESTING. FOR INSTANCE, NZFSA IS TESTING CHINESE IMPORTS ON AN ON-GOING BASIS FOR MELAMIN AND CYANURAC ACID, WHICH CAUSED THE PROBLEM WITH PET FOOD IN THE UNITED STATES. NZFSA ALSO TESTED CHINESE IMPORTED FARMED FISH FOR ANTIMICROBIAL PRODUCTS AND REPORTEDLY FOUND LEVELS SIMILAR TO THOSE FOUND BY THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA.

¶16. NEW ZEALAND IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE QUAD (NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, UNITED STATES AND CANADA) GROUP. IT HOSTED THE QUAD MEETING ON FOOD SAFETY IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR. THE QUAD GROUP IS AN IMPORTANT VEHICLE FOR SHARING INFORMATION ON FOOD SAFETY AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE U.S., WITH NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA AND CANADA ON BEST PRACTICES.

¶17. OVERALL CONSUMER SAFETY (NOT SPECIFICALLY AGRICULTURAL OR MEDICINE/HEALTH PRODUCT RELATED) IN NEW ZEALAND IS THE PURVIEW OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS (MCA) WHICH IS A SUBDIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE MCA CAN INVESTIGATE UNSAFE PRODUCTS, SUGGEST MODIFICATIONS TO MAKE A PRODUCT SAFE, REQUEST THE UNSAFE PRODUCT BE REMOVED FROM SALE, GIVE ADVICE TO COMPANIES RECALLING UNSAFE PRODUCTS, AND HELP DEVELOP SELF-REGULATION OPTIONS. IF CIRCUMSTANCE WARRANTS, THE MCA WILL RECALL UNSAFE PRODUCTS, BAN AN UNSAFE PRODUCT AND ESTABLISH MANDATORY STANDARDS.

¶18. NEW ZEALAND MEDIA HAVE RECENTLY BEEN RUNNING SEVERAL FEATURE STORIES REGARDING THE UPTICK IN CASES IN THE UNITED

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STATES AND NEW ZEALAND OF RECENT UNSAFE IMPORTS FROM CHINA. THIS COVERAGE PROMPTED LOCAL INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS TO AIR A CONSUMER WATCHDOG PROGRAM WHICH FOUND DANGEROUS LEVELS OF FORMALDEHYDE IN WOOLEN AND COTTON CLOTHES IMPORTED FROM CHINA. AS MENTIONED IN THIS CABLE, THERE HAVE BEEN CALLS FOR PARLIAMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE LABELING REQUIREMENTS OF IMPORTED PRODUCTS. THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCTS SAFETY COMMISSION ROUTINELY SHARES ITS "HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS ALERTS" WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND WHICH THEN NOTIFIES NEW ZEALAND CUSTOMS AND THE MCA TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR UNSAFE CONSUMER PRODUCTS.

MCCORMICK